GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

Parachutes in Combat Flying

An Army B-26 pilot, recently returned from the combat area, gave the following advice which is quoted from the May issue of *Air Force:*

> "In a combat theater, a pilot should make certain that his crew wear, or have right at hand, chutes at all times. Returning from a mission, my gunners formed the habit of leaving their chutes behind when they went forward to the navigator's compartment to keep warm. I stopped it with these words, 'As last man out, I don't want to have to wait around while you're scrambling around hunting chutes.'"

Make Haste But Do Not Hurry

Before taking off in an SBD for a field carrier qualification training hop, a pilot (350 hours) noticed that his gas gauge for the left tank registered "low." He "assumed," as he explained later, that the gauge was out of order. He was already late for his hop, owing to radio trouble, so he did not have the mechanic on the line check the gasoline.

About 20 minutes after he shifted to the left tank, his engine sputtered and stopped. He made an emergency, wheels-up landing in a plowed field, materially damaging the aircraft.

The Trouble Board assigned half of the error to the pilot's carelessness and the rest to the line crew for failure to gas the left tank after a previous flight.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

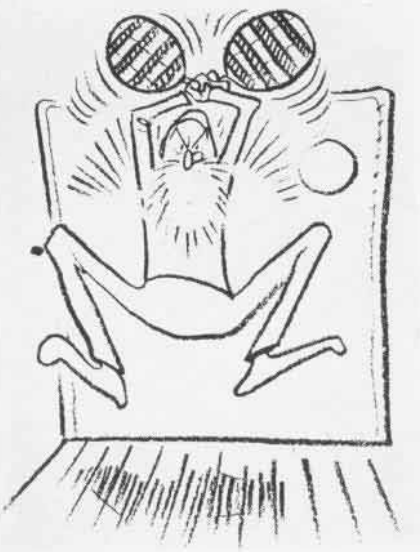
You can't do this in aviation—a bum guess may cost your life!

There are plenty of hazards without guessing or assuming anything on such easily checked items as this one was.

Attention Wildcat Pilots

Recent reports of accidental retraction of F4F and FM landing gear indicate there is need for further instruction as to correct pilot procedure for locking landing gear in down position.

The landing gear extension mechanism in the F4F and FM is not designed to withstand loads imposed by



landing. These loads must be borne by the down-lock. In an effort to acquaint pilots with characteristics of the gear extension mechanism, the contractor has issued the following instructions:

> "In lowering the landing gear, the pilot reaches a point at which it becomes harder to move the crank handle and he may tend to stop right there and attempt to engage the lock. However, it takes *two more revolutions,* which are relatively easy, to bring the gear over dead center, and *it does happen* that new pilots do not realize this."

As Good As Shot Down

During a gunnery training hop, a section leader entered into an overhead run while his wingman began a steep roundhouse, high side run from starboard. The section leader fired a burst, broke sharply down to the left, on the port side and on a course parallel to the sleeve. This put him directly in the wingman's line of fire. A bullet entered the fuselage of his plane about a foot behind his head and cut the hydraulic lines controlling the flap and landing gear mechanisms. Consequently, all hydraulic pressure in system was lost.

Arriving back at the field, the pilot could not lower his wheels by the normal method and upon deciding to use the emergency system, failed to slow up sufficiently to permit the air pressure of the system to lower and lock the wheels. They just dangled from the wheel wells.

The severed hydraulic lines by this time had filled the bottom of the cockpit with hydraulic fluid. The pilot thought this was gasoline. Fearing fire if he made a belly landing, he landed in the bay, resulting in loss of the airplane.

Squadrons
LET NANEWS HEAR FROM YOU!

Your Friend, the Yellow Sheet

While taxiing out to the take-off position, an SBD swerved right toward a parked plane. The left brake failed to hold despite pumping by the pilot. A collision with the parked plane could not then be avoided.

During the subsequent investigation it was discovered that the hydraulic line to the left brake was loose at the connection, allowing the hydraulic fluid to leak out.

The following is quoted from the Aircraft Trouble Report: "In view of the fact that the service personnel responsible for the maintenance of the subject aircraft did conform strictly to the instructions appearing on the Daily Flight Inspection Form, this squadron cannot make any recommendations to correct the recurrence of similar trouble."

Grampaw Pettibone says:

Now ain't that something! Well, I can make a recommendation—*inspect the damn thing.*

The "Yellow Sheet" is universally applicable to all planes and was designed to *help* squadrons insure that their planes were ready for flight. It covers complete inspection of each major assembly, without listing part numbers for every nut and bolt. Actually, hydraulic brakes are covered on the form by item 3 under Landing Gear—"Inspect Brake Linkage Gear." (Brake linkage would include everything between the brake pedals and the brake shoes.) If that isn't enough to get such inspection, paragraph one of the instructions reads, "Additional sheets may be attached hereto as required by indivdual units."

Mark my word—any unit which finds certain equipment is giving them trouble and then doesn't do anything about it, simply because it isn't specifically mentioned on the inspection form, that unit has a screw loose some place. And I certainly don't mean on their airplanes, either!

Chockman frees an F6F preparatory to its rush down flight deck to join other *Hellcats* already aloft. In operations, teamwork and split-second timing are vital to the success of every mission

GRAMPAW'S SAFETY QUIZ

All aviators should know the answers to these questions. In the air, the penalty for not knowing may prove fatal. If you miss an answer on the ground, penalize yourself by looking up the reference. If you don't, I claim you're a sucker!

1. **Why is an engine potentially dangerous when it has an excessively rich idle mixture?**
2. **When flying on instruments, what is the proper method of recovering from a power-on diving spiral?**
3. **If the normal stalling speed of your airplane is 90 knots in the clean condition, at what air speed (in the clean condition) will you stall: (a) in a 75° bank, and (b) in a 4 "g" dive pull out?**
4. **What Bureau of Aeronautics publications contain the maneuvering restrictions for naval aircraft?**
5. **Is an over-the-top flight governed by instrument flight rules?**

ANSWERS ON PAGE 40

Better Be Careful Than Sorry

People who are careless about following safety instructions around airplanes sooner or later end up in trouble —sometimes just *end up*.

Certain safety instructions may appear "picayune" because you have seen them violated time and again without anyone's getting hurt. But that isn't the point. The point is that some people have been hurt when these instructions were not observed. *The following accident will illustrate this:*

An SBD-5 remained overnight at an auxiliary field manned by a skeleton staff. Two Aviation Ordnancemen helped to start the plane in the morning: one at the starter crank and the other standing by the fire extinguishers.

The engine did not fire on the first try nor on the second, so the pilot instructed the men to pull the prop through. In accordance with instructions, they called "Switch off." Up to this point, everything had been done according to Hoyle, but note carefully the following combination of errors and circumstances causing this accident:

1. The pilot turned the ignition switch off and answered "Switch off." He neglected, however, to turn the *battery switch off*. This all-too-common practice seldom causes trouble, but . . .

2. In this case, the starter engage toggle was binding a bit, so the spring did not retract it completely. Thus, although the starter was disengaged, the booster ignition coil, activated by the same toggle, was not disengaged.

3. Even this need not have caused an accident, if the propeller had been pulled through properly. But this time the ordnancemen foolishly elected to put their shoulders against it and push. This, too, has been done before without messy results, but not this time. . . .

As the prop was pulled through, the engine fired and continued running *on the booster coil.*

Here was a perfect combination for a fatal accident, but these men were lucky. One of them got away with a broken arm while the other received only a bad bruise.

But why take these unnecessary chances! They can be eliminated by strict observance of all flight regulations and safety precautions.

Attention Corsair Pilots

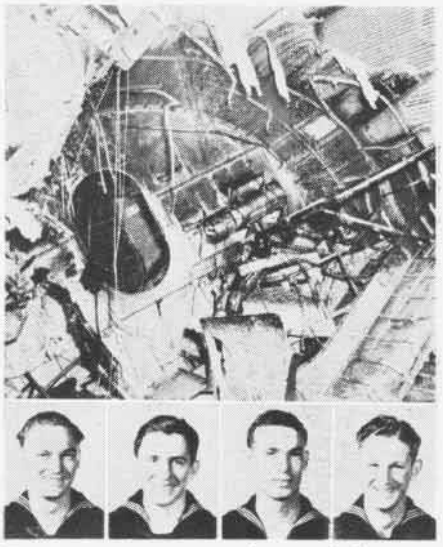
About half way down the strip on take-off, the left wing of an F4U-1 folded, causing the aircraft to swerve and cartwheel down the right side of the runway. The pilot was killed.

Immediate examination of the wreckage showed that the hinge pin in the left wing had not been locked. Further investigation revealed that the pilot had completed two flights on the previous day in this plane with the wing hinge pin warning device showing the danger signal. The morning of the crash, he asked the line chief to check the wing fairing, but took off before this work could be completed.

To explain why the wing remained spread during the two flights the previous day, the reporting officer expressed the opinion that a great deal of hydraulic pressure had been placed on the hinge pin, holding it in place. He believed that during the night the temperature decreased until there was insufficient pressure to hold the hinge pin in place for the attempted take-off. The pilot probably was firmly convinced after two successful flights that the airplane was perfectly safe to fly and that the warning device was not registering.

COMMENT—**Why the pilot took off in the first place with the warning system indicating the wing locking pin *not* in place, cannot be explained. Many man-hours were expended on the design and construction of this warning device, all of which were nullified through failure to heed the glaring signal. The pilot in this case paid dearly for his carelessness.**

Flight Safety Bulletin No. 27-44 states that F4U, F3A, and FG airplanes SHALL be flown with the hydraulic wingfold selector control in the "SPREAD" position at all times. *Corsair* pilots should know this.



THESE MEN SURVIVED *this crash because:*
1. They were at assigned landing stations
2 They wore Mae West life jackets
3. They knew approved life raft procedure

Such a Little Thing!

An SNB was completely wrecked simply because an instructor neglected to lock the tail wheel before take-off.

The instructor failed to lock the tail wheel when he turned the airplane over to his student to permit him to attempt his first take-off. When the airplane commenced to swerve, the student, not having rudder control, attempted to check the swerve with throttle. He over-corrected, however, and started turning the opposite way. Again he added opposite throttle and started swinging back the other way.

Not until they were headed for a ditch at approximately 65 knots, did the instructor take over. He staggered the plane across the ditch, but scraped a wing. This caused the plane to cartwheel to a stop, where it caught on fire. No one was seriously injured.

Grampaw Pettibone says:

With SNB's costing approximately $70,000 a throw, you can readily see that teaching instructors the rudiments of flying in this manner is quite prohibitive.